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ABSTRACT

Among the most challenging and complicated issues facing individual charter schools is the matter of accountability. It is difficult to know how a charter school is actually performing, mainly because much of the desired data about the school do not exist. This guide aims to overcome the lack of good accountability information by presenting a methodical way of thinking about charter-school accountability. It provides charter-school founders and operators with a foundation and frame of reference for judging whether their school is likely to reach its goals. The guide begins with remarks that set the context for the discussion of charter-school accountability. The information that follows is organized by two types of goals for which charter schools should be held accountable: (1) academic goals for student achievement; and (2) nonacademic and operational goals, including those goals unique to each school. The guide examines each element of this twofold framework and provides descriptions and a set of questions for each area to help founders and operators develop an accountability plan with challenging yet attainable and measurable goals. Appended are examples of plans and guidelines from charter schools that illustrate some of the issues in the guide. (WFA)

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